

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

INSIDE

Antonio Guerrero's new Cuban Five
prison paintings – a talk with his sister

— PAGE 7

VOL. 78/NO. 41 NOVEMBER 17, 2014

'NY Times' puts focus on rulers' Cuba policy debate

BY JOHN STUDER

The *New York Times* Nov. 3 urged the White House to swap the three members of the Cuban Five who remain in prison for U.S. agent Alan Gross, who is serving a 15-year sentence in Cuba for carrying out a covert State Department operation that involved distributing sophisticated communications equipment to counterrevolutionaries on the island. The editorial was the latest of four by the paper over the last month calling on the Barack Obama administration to normalize diplomatic relations with Cuba and end Washington's more than five-decade trade and financial embargo against the island.

The *Times'* campaign has been met with sharp criticism by the *Washington Post*, the major liberal daily based in the U.S. capital, and other big-business media. The ensuing debate has brought differences over U.S. ruling-class strategy aimed at undermining the Cuban Revolution into the open. And it has shone a new spotlight on

Continued on page 4

Now is time to step up efforts to free Cuban Five!

Now is the time for supporters of the Cuban Revolution to step up efforts to get out the truth about the Cuban Five and broaden support for the international fight to free Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and

EDITORIAL

Antonio Guerrero!

A series of editorials in the *New York Times* has called for shifts in U.S. government policy toward Cuba, including an end to the U.S. economic blockade, normalization of relations and a swap between the Cuban Five and U.S. operative Alan Gross. The campaign has drawn criticism from other papers that stand behind U.S. state policy and represent the prevailing views of the U.S. ruling families, opening a bourgeois debate on how best to advance Washington's goal of undermining the Cuban Revolution.

This debate has put a spotlight on Washington's unremitting hostility

Continued on page 3

Party-Building Fund gets boost from subscription drive success

BY PAUL MAILHOT

The success of winning more than 2,500 workers and youth to subscribe to the *Militant* newspaper over the past seven weeks has given a boost to efforts by members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party to win \$100,000 in contributions to help finance the party's work. The SWP Party-Building Fund concludes on Nov. 11. The final scoreboard for the drive will be published in the issue of the *Militant* printed Nov. 19.

In Seattle, organizers of the fund campaign have been concentrating their efforts over the last week on visiting long-time and new readers of the *Militant* to discuss developments in the class struggle and world politics, as well as the activity of the Socialist Workers Party. Many appreciate the coverage of labor fights and social protests from around the world and meeting communist workers who are involved in these struggles. Some want to contribute fi-

Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund (Week 7)

Area	Quota	Collected	%
Atlanta	\$8,600	\$7,495	87%
Brooklyn	\$10,000	\$8,420	84%
New York	\$10,000	\$8,225	82%
Seattle	\$7,600	\$6,167	81%
San Francisco*	\$14,500	\$11,495	79%
Chicago**	\$11,000	\$8,373	76%
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Lincoln*	\$150	\$155	103%
Omaha*	\$3,200	\$1,758	55%
Houston	\$3,300	\$1,005	30%
Other		\$600	
Total	\$100,100	\$76,634	77%
Should Be	\$100,000	\$88,000	88%

*raised goal

Continued on page 3

Burkina Faso: Protests depose hated president

Open toilers' battle for political space



Reuters/Joe Penney

Protesters outside military headquarters in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Oct. 30, during mass outpouring across country that forced President Blaise Compaoré to resign next day.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Popular demonstrations of hundreds of thousands in the West African country of Burkina Faso forced President Blaise Compaoré out of power Oct. 31. The mobilization was sparked by the tyrant's move to amend the constitution to allow him to remain in office for a fifth term. Actions in solidarity with the protests

took place in nearby Ghana, Ivory Coast and other African countries, as well as throughout Europe and North America, including in Montreal, Paris, New York and Berlin.

Compaoré had ruled the land-locked country of 17 million since he usurped power in 1987 in a coup that overturned a popular democratic rev-

Continued on page 9

Garment workers in Bangladesh fight plant closing, build union

BY EMMA JOHNSON AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

DHAKA, Bangladesh — "Stand as one! Stand as one! Workers of the world, stand as one!" That chant echoed down Topkhana Road as more than 400 garment workers marched in a sea of red union flags through the city's commercial center here Oct. 28.

The workers, who are affiliated to the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF), were demanding that the owners of Ha-Meem Sportswear reopen the factory, which was closed

two weeks earlier in a move to break their union.

Several months ago the workers at Ha-Meem, located in Dhaka's Tejgaon industrial zone, decided to organize a

EYEWITNESS REPORT

union to combat low wages, abuse by the bosses and unsafe working conditions. When harassment, physical violence, and firings of individual union

Continued on page 2

Inside Iraqi Kurdish troops join Syrian Kurds in Kobani battle

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

"Our morale is very high and we are convinced we will expel [Islamic State fighters] from Kobani," a Kurdish Peshmerga commander told Agence France-Presse Nov. 4. One hundred fifty Peshmerga combat-

Continued on page 9

Inside

Fight against killer cops in UK 'not going away'

6

Thomas Sankara: Struggles of women deepen revolution

8

—On the picket line, p. 5—

L.A.-area grocery workers demand contract, respect

Movers in Illinois strike in fight for first contract

California farmworkers fight bosses' union-busting drive

Bangladesh garment workers

Continued from front page

militants failed to intimidate the workers, the bosses closed the factory without notice.

"This is an illegal closing," NGWF President Amirul Haque Amin told demonstrators as they gathered in front of the National Press Club, a rallying point for labor and other protests. "We have submitted complaints to the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Trade and the owners to demand that they take the necessary steps to reopen the factory. But they all remain silent."

"Workers have applied three times to register their trade union with the Labor Ministry," Amin said. "But they have been rejected repeatedly because of the company's influence."

Workers chanted in response: "If our demand isn't met, we won't go home."

Amin was joined on the speakers platform by officials of half a dozen other garment workers federations.

The unionists marched up the road toward the Labor Ministry, broadcasting their chants on a sound system mounted on a rickshaw. Police put up barbed-wire barricades to stop them. A seven-member delegation, led by NGWF General Secretary Safia Parvin, submitted a statement to ministry officials demanding the immediate reopening of the factory. Afterward the marchers, in a defiant but celebratory mood, converged on the union hall for a rally.

Following the rally, union leaders invited *Militant* reporters to the union hall for an exchange with a dozen workers from Ha-Meem. They readily told their stories, while requesting

their actual names and photos not be used to avoid being blacklisted by employers. At least seven workers previously fired by Ha-Meem have been turned down for new jobs in other garment plants.

"Before, we didn't know what rights we had and what benefits we were entitled to," said Robi, 26, a sewing machine operator. "But we saw news about other workers who had won benefits through organizing a union, so we decided that's what we needed. After we organized, the company began paying the benefits. But after six months they started to harass and threaten us more and more, saying we would lose our jobs if we didn't give up the union."

Despite the company threats, more workers joined the union and now some 350, nearly 80 percent, are members.

Workers said bosses routinely cheat them out of overtime pay. Robi showed a payslip where 14 hours of overtime were recorded. "But they only paid me for five hours," he said. After eight hours workers are supposed to be paid double time.

Bosses fail to intimidate workers

"We went to the Human Resources office and told them they had cheated us out of pay," said Joba, 26, a sewing machine operator. "Two supervisors slapped and kicked us. I was pushed to the floor. Some workers had their scarves ripped off. We protested to the owner. So they set up a meeting between the workers and management, but brought thugs to the meeting to intimidate us."

The owners then called the police,



Militant/Ron Poulsen

More than 400 union garment workers march in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Oct. 28 demanding bosses reopen Ha-Meem Sportswear factory, recently closed in union-busting move.

who arrested 12 workers on false charges of "inciting violence." They were jailed until the NGWF bailed them out the next day.

"The company tried to scare us into silence," said Bokul, 25.

The following morning, Oct. 13, workers started work as usual. Then at 2:30 p.m. the bosses called in the cops, who forced the workers out of the plant. Since then it has been closed.

"The bosses have newspapers and TV stations," Robi said. "They are members of Parliament, they control the government. They don't answer to anybody." On a wall at the national union headquarters is a list of some 500 union complaints of illegal firings that remain pending before the labor court.

The Ha-Meem Group owns 26 garment and five laundry plants in Bangladesh, as well as a denim mill, a sweater factory, a newspaper and a TV news channel. The Bangladeshi-owned company exports clothing for international brands such as The Gap, Walmart, J.C. Penney and H&M.

Most Ha-Meem Sportswear workers are in their mid-20s. Like many others in the country's garment industry, which today has a workforce of about 4 million, the majority moved to the city from rural areas to take their first industrial job.

Workers at this plant were part of the hundreds of thousands who took

part in a six-month-long series of strikes and protests in 2013 that forced the government to raise the minimum wage by 77 percent.

Workers respond to deadly disasters

"In the last 22 months, nearly 200 garment unions have been registered," Kalpona Akter, executive director of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity, told the *Militant* Oct. 29. "Before that, maybe one or two a year were registered. This increase was workers' response to Tazreen and Rana Plaza."

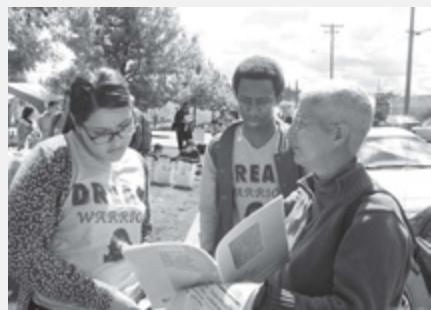
In November 2012 more than 110 workers were killed in a fire at Tazreen Fashions on the outskirts of Dhaka. Just a few months later, in April 2013, 1,127 garment workers at the Rana Plaza factory complex lost their lives on the altar of profits when a shoddily built eight-story building collapsed. In response, workers poured into the streets by hundreds of thousands protesting the dangerous working conditions.

"These struggles opened up space for workers to raise many issues," Akter said. "We were able to win an increase in the minimum wage and to press for safer workplaces and union rights. The only way the bosses listen to us is when we go into the streets."

In the discussion with *Militant* worker-correspondents at the union hall, Robi remarked, "Workers don't know enough about other workers' struggles. We need to reach out to each other."

THE MILITANT

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Militant/Jeanne FitzMaurice
Mary Martin, right, SWP congressional candidate in Washington, at immigrant protest.

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Step up effort to free Cuban 5

Continued from front page

toward revolutionary Cuba — one of the most constant features of U.S. foreign policy for more than half a century. This has included thwarted military invasions and assassinations; numerous acts of sabotage and terror; and a crippling financial and trade embargo. With different and shifting tactics, the aim has remained the same: to overturn the revolution that threw off a U.S.-backed military dictatorship and brought workers and farmers to power.

The *Times* most recent editorial on Cuban policy focused attention on the Cuban Five, creating an opening for discussion among working people and others about who the five revolutionaries are, why they were framed, why they should be free and what we can do about it.

At the same time, the ruling-class debate takes place as the world can see the moral values of the Cuban Revolution put into practice in West Africa, where hundreds of Cuban medical volunteers have responded in a swift and decisive manner to help combat the deadly Ebola epidemic. This provides a new opening to talk about Cuba's internationalist foreign policy and why three of the Five — Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González and René González — were among some 425,000 Cubans who volunteered to help Angola defeat invasions by the white supremacist army of apartheid South Africa between 1975 and 1991. And on what side of that battle Washington stood.

The debate also takes place during

an uptick in labor resistance and social protest, spurred by the world crisis of capitalism and the exploiters' drive against the living standards, political rights and very dignity of workers and farmers. This includes growing protests against police brutality, plea-bargain frame-ups, abuse of prisoners and summary killings by cops from Ferguson, Missouri, to Staten Island, New York.

And now we have another powerful tool in the fight to free the Five in a new series of watercolors by Antonio Guerrero titled "Absolved by Solidarity," which graphically depicts how the FBI, federal prosecutors, court officials and the capitalist press engineered their frame-up.

We should have no illusions that the opinions of the *Times* represent a shift in U.S. state policy. The Obama administration has thus far shown no such inclination, nor have the main mouthpieces of America's ruling families. The *Times*, once a major voice of the U.S. ruling class, represents today a narrower layer of bourgeois public opinion than at any time in its history.

Now is not the time — if there ever could be one — to become complacent and put hopes in the Obama administration, much less rely on the editorial board of the *Times*. Now, more than ever, is the time to redouble our efforts to build a "jury of millions" that can make a difference.

Free the Cuban Five! Normalize relations with Cuba! End the U.S. embargo!

Rallies worldwide back Kurds' defense of Kobani



Militant/Eric Simpson

Dozens protest in San Francisco Nov. 1 in support of besieged Kurdish forces fighting against heavily armed Islamic State units in the northern Syrian town of Kobani. That day tens of thousands of Kurds and their supporters took to the streets in hundreds of cities in more than 30 countries, from Turkey to Japan, Afghanistan to the United Kingdom. More than 2,000 rallied in London with banners reading "Kobani is not alone," a popular slogan worldwide.

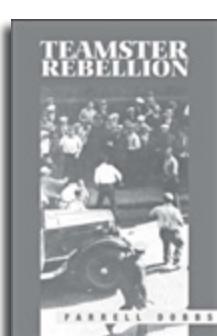
Hundreds demonstrated in Glasgow, Scotland, demanding Ankara open its borders to allow movement of arms, medical supplies and food to Kobani and for unconditional asylum for the 1.8 million Kurdish refugees in Turkey.

Hundreds marched in cities across Canada. In Vancouver, as at other protests, participants held placards or wore T-shirts pointing to the role of women combatants among Kurdish troops defending Kobani. Dozens demonstrated in New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Houston and other U.S. cities.

Protest organizers are calling a "Unite for Kurdistan" national rally in front of the White House in Washington, D.C., for Nov. 29 at noon.

— JOHN STUDER

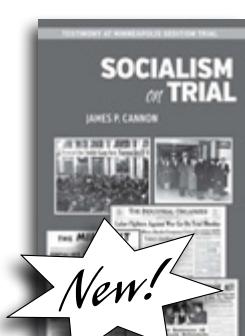
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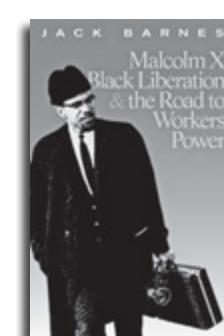
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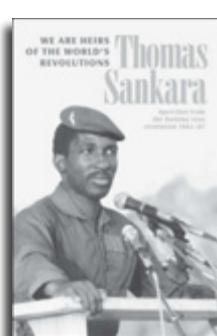


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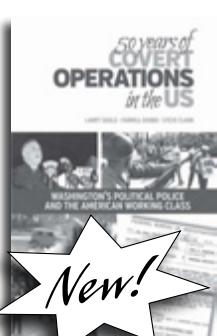
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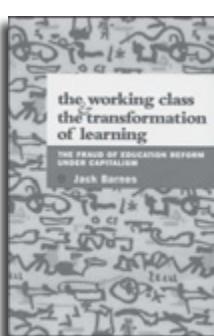
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UN condemns US embargo of Cuba for 23rd straight year

BY RÓGER CALERO

UNITED NATIONS — For the 23rd consecutive year, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution Oct. 28 calling on Washington to end its trade and financial embargo against Cuba. As usual, only the governments of the United States and Israel voted against and the virtual U.S. colonies of the Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau abstained.

The U.S. embargo against Cuba has been in effect since October 1960. Every U.S. administration since has maintained it with the aim of imposing hardship on the island and punishing Cuba's workers and farmers for overthrowing the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959 and wresting political power from the capitalists and landlord exploiters.

Government representatives from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean condemned the U.S. embargo, noting its impact on Cuba's economy, as well as the social advances of the revolution in face of these difficulties. Several representatives thanked Cuba for its help in establishing education and health programs in their countries and applauded its unparalleled contribution to the fight against the Ebola epidemic

in West Africa.

"Cuba has made solidarity its foreign policy, as has been reaffirmed recently" in West Africa, said Yanerit Morgan, Mexico's ambassador to the U.N.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez said the embargo has resulted in estimated damages totaling some \$1.1 trillion. He noted the stepped-up use of its crippling provisions, which have included the imposition of fines totaling some \$11 billion against 38 banks for carrying out transactions with Cuba.

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Ronald Godard said that while Cuba's contributions to the fight against Ebola are "laudable, they do not excuse or diminish the regime's treatment of its own people." Revealing the U.S. rulers' unyielding desire to reimpose capitalist exploitation and U.S. domination of the island, he said Cuba "will not thrive" until it adopts "the sound macro-economic policies that have contributed to the success of Cuba's neighbors in Latin America."

"Cuba will never renounce its sovereignty, or the path freely chosen by its people to build a more just, efficient, prosperous and sustainable socialism," Rodríguez said earlier. "It will never forego its quest for a different international order."

Cubans 'first to respond' to call to fight Ebola



Ronald Hernández Torres

"The solidarity of the Cuban doctors is something wonderful, they were the first to respond to the international call and I think that everyone must acknowledge their courage," Sylvie Briand, head of the World Health Organization's technical team on the Ebola crisis, said at a U.N. conference in Paris Oct. 31.

Above, Cuban health workers, attend Oct. 31 inauguration of U.S.-built clinic near Monrovia, Liberia, that they will staff.

Cuba has sent 256 doctors, nurses and other health workers to Sierra Leone, Guinea-Conakry and Liberia, the West African countries hardest hit by the epidemic. Another 205 Cuban volunteers have undergone three weeks of intensive training and are waiting for needed infrastructure to be completed to join the effort. A total of 15,000 Cubans have requested the honor of taking part in what many on the island consider to be an internationalist duty.

The Cuban volunteers have agreed to go to West Africa for at least six months. Leaders of the internationalist brigade pledged to stay until the deadly disease is defeated. World Health Organization officials have stressed that what is needed most are trained medical workers who can treat the infected and work with the population to implement preventive measures. The overall scope of Cuba's commitment in this regard surpasses that of the rest of the world.

— SETH GALINSKY

'New York Times' puts focus on rulers' Cuba policy debate

Continued from front page

Washington's unending hostility toward Cuba and the frame-up of the Cuban Five at a time when hundreds of Cuban volunteers are carrying out an unparalleled effort to combat Ebola in West Africa.

Since the popular insurrection of 1959 that overthrew the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista and brought workers and farmers to power, Washington's policy toward Cuba has been guided by one singular goal: to restore capitalist exploitation and U.S. domination of the island. The U.S. rulers' shifting tactics over the decades have included military invasions, assassinations, bombings, biological weapons and nuclear threats. One aspect of U.S. policy that has remained fairly constant, however, is economic warfare designed to impose maximum hardship on the population.

In 1960 the Eisenhower administration initiated a partial trade embargo against Cuba. In 1962 Democratic President John Kennedy imposed a near-total economic blockade, which remains in place to this day. The embargo was reinforced when Democratic President William Clinton signed the Helms-Burton bill in 1996, which increased financial costs to Cuba and restricted the country's access to medicine and medical equipment. A cornerstone of U.S. state policy, it has been enforced under Democratic and Republican administrations alike, and use of its crippling provisions have been stepped up under the Obama administration.

On Oct. 10 the *Times* ran a front-page article titled, "In Ricketty Boats, Cuban Migrants Again Flee to U.S." The next-day editorial, published in both English and Spanish, carried the headline "End the U.S. Embargo on Cuba."

Obama could win "a significant foreign policy success," the *Times* editors

argued, restoring Washington's waning influence in Latin America and the Caribbean and undercutting Cuba's ability to "blame the embargo for its shortcomings" and "keep ordinary Cubans largely cut off from the world."

The *Times* called on the White House to "remove Cuba from the State Department's list of nations that sponsor terrorist organizations" and "lift caps on remittances, allow Americans to finance private Cuban businesses and expand opportunities for travel to the island," pointing to Cuban government measures to "liberalize and diversify" its economy to alleviate the island's economic crisis (which has been exacerbated by the U.S. embargo).

"Starting in 1961," the editorial said, "Washington has imposed sanctions in an effort to oust the Castro regime. Over the decades, it became clear to many American policy makers that the embargo was an utter failure." Closer ties, it argued, would "better position Washington to press the Cubans on democratic reforms" and help lead to the release of "Alan Gross, who has been unjustly imprisoned by Cuba." That piece was silent on the Cuban Five.

Eight days later the *Times* ran a second editorial titled, "Cuba's Impressive Role on Ebola," saying that Cuba "stands to play the most robust role among the nations seeking to contain the virus."

"It should be lauded and emulated," the editors say. Pointing to a *Granma* column where Fidel Castro said "the United States and Cuba must put aside their differences" to combat Ebola, the editorial concludes that "he's absolutely right." More than a week earlier the *Post* ran an article titled, "In the Medical Response to Ebola, Cuba is Punching Far Above Its Weight" and the *Wall Street Journal* published a piece under the headline "Cuban Doctors at the Forefront of Ebola Battle in Africa."

In decades past the *Times* was a major voice of the U.S. ruling families, but today it represents a narrower section of bourgeois public opinion. Instead, it has come to more reflect the prevailing views among meritocratic professionals centered in academia, the media, "think tanks," "nonprofit" institutions and the like.

Speaking for the great bulk of the U.S. propertied rulers, the *Post* responded Oct. 20 to the *Times* campaign for a shift in U.S. policy toward Cuba in an editorial titled, "Cuba Should Not be Rewarded for Denying Freedom to Its People."

Saying there is "no sign that the Castro brothers are loosening their grip," the *Post* editors dismiss the *Times*' recommendations. "Lifting the embargo," they conclude, "would reward and ratify their intransigence."

On Oct. 25 the *Times* published a third editorial arguing the White House "should not continue to anchor American policy on a failed course that has strained Washington's relationship with allies in the hemisphere, prevented robust trade with the island and offered the Cuban government a justification for its failures."

Church leaders: Free Cuban 5, Gross

As this debate was coming to the fore, John McCullough, president and CEO of Church World Service, a humanitarian religious coalition, and two other leaders of the group visited Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five, in prison in Marianna, Florida, Oct. 13.

McCullough has announced plans to lead a church delegation to Cuba in November to meet religious leaders and the families of the Cuban Five and to visit the other two still-imprisoned members of the Five, Ramón Labañino and Gerardo Hernández, when he returns.

"CWS is calling for the humanitarian

release of Mr. Gross by the Cuban government and of the remaining Cuban 5 prisoners by the U.S. government," he said.

On Nov. 3 the *Times* editors called for "A Prisoner Swap with Cuba," saying, "Mr. Gross's continued imprisonment has become the chief obstacle to a diplomatic breakthrough."

Admitting that "Gross traveled to Havana five times in 2009, posing as a tourist, to smuggle communications equipment," the editors call for Obama to win his release by commuting the sentences of the three remaining framed-up Cuban Five prisoners, who have spent more than 16 years in U.S. prisons.

The *Times* says releasing them is "justified considering the lengthy time they have served, the troubling questions about the fairness of their trial," and most importantly, "the potential diplomatic payoff in clearing the way toward a new bilateral relationship."

This, the paper argued, would position "the United States to encourage positive change in Cuba" — i.e. to roll back the revolutionary gains conquered and defended by Cuba's workers and farmers.



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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help make this column a voice of workers' resistance!

This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about the labor resistance that is unfolding today. It seeks to give voice to those engaged in battle and help build solidarity. Its success depends on input from readers. This week we have an article by a worker on strike in Chicago who hasn't written for the paper before. If you are involved in a struggle with the bosses or have information on one, please contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or 212-244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

—Maggie Trowe

LA-area grocery workers demand a contract, respect

ARLETA, Calif. — More than 200 unionists rallied at the El Super market here Oct. 23 demanding a contract from the expanding grocery chain, which has 46 stores, seven of them union.

Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union have been without a contract since September 2013. El Super backed a petition to decertify the union filed with the National Labor Relations Board by a group of workers April 18 this year. Workers rejected the company's "last, best and final offer" May 2.

"We want a just contract with 40 hours, a dignified wage and, above all, respect," said Fermin Rodriguez, a shop steward and cashier at El Super.

Luis Meraz, who works at the store in Compton, another L.A. suburb, said many co-workers get only 32 hours per week. "You can't live on that," he said. "And workers get only two sick days, with a letter from the doctor. We want three days and no letter." Other demands include seniority rights, affordable health benefits and paid sick leave.

—Betsey Stone

Movers in Illinois strike in fight for first contract

SKOKIE, Ill. — We, the workers at Golan's Moving and Storage here, are on strike against the company because of an endless series of unfair labor practices, the most important of them being the company's refusal to bargain in good faith with us for our first contract.

Last December we voted by 85 percent to be part of Teamsters Local 705. We need a union to address a variety of issues: the company doesn't pay overtime until we've worked 80 hours; management carries out capricious disciplinary measures, including unauthorized deductions from our checks; an average of one hour out of every five we work is unpaid; we have no medical insurance; and we work in unsafe conditions.

Since the vote, Golan's has been doing everything possible to stall negotiations, hoping workers would tire of wait-

ing and give up on the union.

But we began a strike July 28 and we've been picketing every day. Roving teams follow scab crews to picket their work. Many replacement movers quit their jobs after they experience the same abusive treatment we denounce.

A month into the strike, the company convinced two drivers and a helper to cross the line. We felt betrayed. At first the scabs pretended they were happy with the deal. Then, one of them approached the union and asked for a second chance. We understood that to win the strike we needed them on our side. During a big moving job a few days later the three walked out, leaving the moving truck parked and the job unfinished.

We are not alone. Arise Chicago Working Center is helping build support and other unionists, including teachers, nurses and janitors, visit our picket line, which boosts morale.

We are developing a sense of a collective interest, learning to demand our rights. Golan's is feeling the pressure.

—Augusto Rufasto

Phone workers in New England walk off the job over concessions

PORLTAND, Maine — Some 2,000 phone and Internet workers at FairPoint Communications walked off the job across Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont Oct. 17 after the company unilaterally imposed concessions. The strikers are members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the Communications Workers of America.

The union's contract with FairPoint expired Aug. 2. Later that month the company walked away from negotiations and froze its pension plan, ended medical benefits for retirees and required workers to begin paying for part of their health care benefits. The company also announced it would begin using contractors for some jobs.

"Everything is at an impasse in negotiations," Cindy Hoard, a picket captain, said at the picket line.

Hoard said IBEW and CWA members who work at Verizon Business across the street have walked the picket



Rally at El Super grocery store in Arleta, Calif., Oct. 23 for contract and against union busting.



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Maintenance workers, members of SEIU Local 32BJ, marched in Washington, D.C., Oct. 27 to protest moves by Howard University to outsource jobs of nearly 200 workers.

line.

"Solidarity is the only thing we have. We've got to stick together," Hoard said.

—Ted Leonard

Howard University workers rally against job outsourcing

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Some 75 Howard University maintenance workers, members of SEIU Local 32BJ, marched Oct. 27 to protest the university's move to outsource the jobs of nearly 200 cleaners, carpenters, painters, electricians and plumbers. Several weeks ago workers were told that starting Jan. 1, 2015, they will no longer be working for the university, but nationwide contractor Thompson Hospitality, raising questions about their wages, benefits and jobs.

"They have already been making cuts," said electrician Jerome Davis. "There used to be eight licensed electricians here. Now we are down to one."

Protesters marched to the administration building, chanting, "The money you pay the contractor, you should pay the workers!" and "When we fight we win!"

—James Harris

Locked-out uranium workers fault Honeywell for toxic gas leak

Uranium hexafluoride was released into the atmosphere from Honeywell's Metropolis, Illinois, nuclear conversion plant Oct. 26. The plant has been operated by strikebreakers since the company locked out 150 members of United Steelworkers Local 7-669 Aug. 2.

Local 7-669 President Stephen Lech, who posted a video of the gas release on the union's website, condemned Honeywell's response in a news release the next day. "Local citizens called 911 and were told that the company has reported the situation to be under control, while they watched the gaseous vapor leave the building and the site," he said.

Honeywell acknowledged the gas release, but said it never left its property.

When uranium hexafluoride reacts with the atmosphere, it forms toxic uranyl fluoride and hydrofluoric acid, which can damage lungs and skin.

"Honeywell didn't call people in the vicinity to tell them to shelter in place and close their windows until there's an all-clear," said Luckie Atkinson, a member of the local, in a phone interview.

—John Hawkins

Calif. farmworkers fight bosses' union-busting drive

FRESNO, Calif. — Members of the United Farm Workers union who pick fruit for Gerawan Farming are fighting for their first contract and against a well-

financed effort to drive out their union.

"We're fighting for respect more than benefits," Seberiano Salas, 32, told the *Militant*.

"The boss can fire you for any reason," said Juan Cruz Lopez, another Gerawan worker. Salas and Cruz are members of the union's negotiating committee.

Union supporters rallied here, as well as in Berkeley and Los Angeles. City councils in the latter two cities have passed resolutions of support.

In 1990 the fruit pickers voted in the UFW, but bosses didn't enter contract negotiations until January 2013.

"When we asked for a dollar raise, they told us we were crazy," said Primitivo Santiago, who was fired by the company. But as the fight for a contract gained strength, the company, still refusing to sign a pay agreement, raised wages from \$9 to \$11 per hour.

Gerawan crew bosses circulated anti-union petitions. The company paid employees to take part in anti-union rallies, and harassed, disciplined, and fired union supporters.

Over court challenges from the company, the state Agricultural Labor Relations Board imposed a contract in November 2013, but Gerawan has refused to implement it. A union decertification vote was held that same month, but the labor board impounded the ballots pending hearings that began here last month. The union has charged Gerawan management with intimidating witnesses scheduled to testify at the hearings.

On Sept. 28 Democratic Gov. Edmund Brown vetoed a union-supported bill that would have required prompt enforcement of contracts imposed by binding arbitration.

—Eric Simpson and Gerardo Sánchez

Postal unions plan National Day of Action Nov. 14

The four U.S. postal workers unions will join forces with labor allies for a national day of action Nov. 14 in their fight against union busting and cutbacks by the U.S. Postal Service. Rallies and press conferences are planned throughout the country.

The unions are protesting the planned closure or consolidation of 82 postal processing plants in January. Some 140 have been closed since 2012. More than 190,000 postal jobs have been eliminated since 2006, 630 post offices closed and 229 more scheduled to close by the end of the year.

—Kevin Cole

Fight against killer cops in UK 'not going away'

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

LONDON — Hundreds of people rallied here Oct. 25 at an annual protest organized by the United Friends and Families Campaign against deaths in police custody.

"This is the 16th memorial march by families who have lost loved ones at the hands of the state," Marcia Rigg told the crowd, holding up a list of 3,180 names of people who died between 1969 and 2011 in the hands of cops, prison guards, immigration agents or psychiatric ward personnel. "No state agent has been convicted," she said. Rigg's brother Sean died in the Brixton police station after being restrained by cops in 2008. The family has uncovered evidence that contradicts police accounts.

"This has been a big eye-opener for us," said Ajmal Ali, whose cousin Rubel Ahmed, 26, from Bangladesh, died in the Morton Hall immigration detention center Sept. 5. "His only crime was not having the right passport."

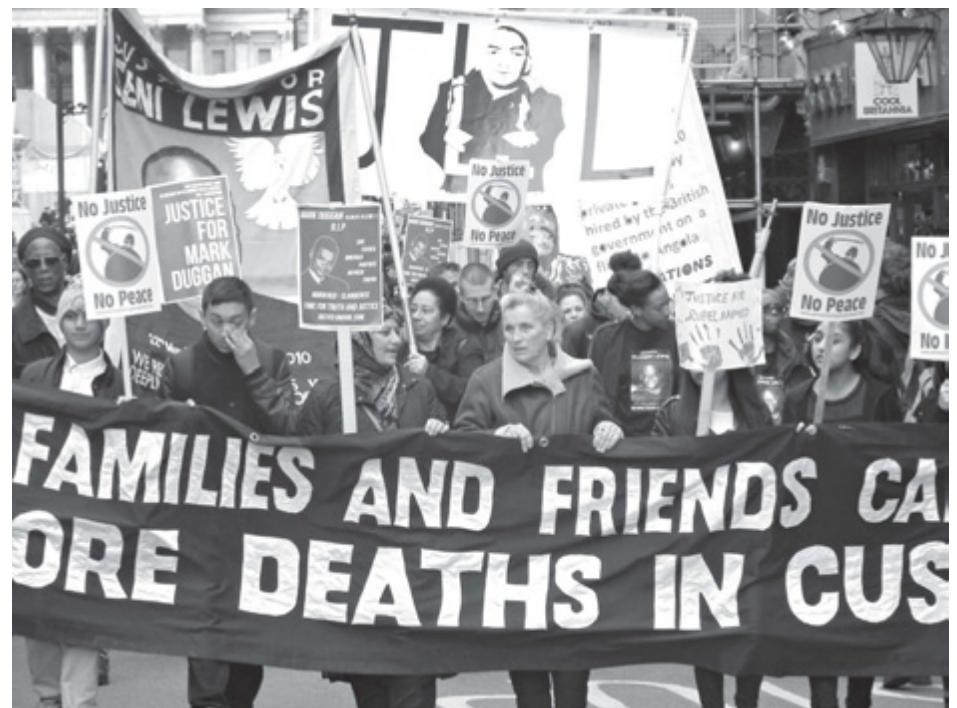
According to fellow inmates, Ahmed had complained about chest pains and

banged on the cell door for an hour, but received no response from guards. The family learned of the death when another inmate contacted Ahmed's solicitor (lawyer). They were later told by the Home Office that Ahmed had committed suicide.

Liberty Louise, spokesperson for the justice for Leon Briggs campaign, told the rally how Briggs died Nov. 4, 2013, after being detained under the Mental Health Act. He was taken to the police station "even though there was an ambulance at hand," she said.

An inquest into his death was suspended on the pretext that the government's Independent Police Complaints Commission had to conduct its investigation first. "These are delay tactics they've used with every single family," she said.

Among the speakers was Carole Duggan, aunt of Mark Duggan, who was killed by police in Tottenham, north London, in 2011. An inquest found the cop's shooting "lawful" even though Duggan was unarmed. On Oct. 14 the



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Hundreds rally in London Oct. 25 against deaths while in police custody. Over past several decades, thousands of people in United Kingdom have been killed by cop brutality and neglect.

High Court dismissed the family's legal challenge to the inquest. "This verdict gives police the right to kill any young man, no questions asked. We won't accept this," Duggan said.

"We're not going away," said Duggan, a sentiment voiced by many others, including Doreen Bishop, mother of Ricky Bishop; Ajibola Lewis, mother of Olaseni Lewis; Dot Thomas, mother

of Jason Thompson; Tippa Naphtali, cousin of Mikey Powell; and Jan Butler, mother of Lloyd Butler.

"I'll fight until I don't have strength, until there is justice for Joy and all the others," said Myrna Simpson, the mother of Joy Gardner, who died in 1993 four days after cops broke into her north London home to deport her. Officers bound and gagged the 40-year-old Jamaican woman in front of her 5-year-old son, using body belts and 13 feet of tape wrapped around her head. Three cops were acquitted of manslaughter charges in 1995.

Alex Awotunde was attending his first protest. "I started looking around for things like this after I was assaulted by police when I was celebrating my 21st birthday last August," he told the *Militant*. Four officers pinned him down outside a nightclub, pushing his face to the ground, then kicked him into the back of a police van. "It got me thinking. Anything could have happened."

Ottawa uses 'terrorism' to take aim at workers' rights

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL — On Oct. 27 the Canadian government sent "The Protection of Canada from Terrorists Act" to Parliament. Bill C-44 would give the Canadian Security Intelligence Service greater powers to hide informants' identities and eavesdrop on conversations of Canadians abroad.

The proposed bill is the latest in a series of assaults on workers' rights in the name of combating "terrorism." Other proposed measures include lowering the threshold for "preventive arrests" and Bill C-13, now before the Senate, which would allow police access to people's online records and bank account information if they "suspect" but not yet "believe," they are involved in a crime.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced Oct. 23 that he would expedite C-44, the day after Michael Zehaf-Bibeau shot and killed Corporal Nathan Cirillo, a soldier on guard at the National War Memorial in Ottawa. Zehaf-Bibeau was then killed after he began shooting up the Parliament Building. Two days

earlier Martin Couture-Rouleau was shot dead by police after he ran down two Canadian soldiers with a car in St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec.

The government had been holding up Zehaf-Bibeau's passport and had seized Couture-Rouleau's because of alleged ties to Islamic State. Both incidents followed Ottawa's Oct. 7 decision to join Washington's-led war against Islamic State in Iraq. The vote was 157 to 134, with the ruling Conservatives and the

one Green Party member voting in favor and the opposition New Democrats and Liberals voting against. Canada is sending 600 troops, six CF-18 fighter-bombers, two surveillance aircraft and a refueling plane. Islamic State responded with appeals for supporters to carry out attacks in Canada.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police has disclosed that they are monitoring some 90 Canadian citizens as part of 63 "national security" operations.

Australia rally protests deportations of asylum seekers

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY — More than 1,000 people demonstrated here Oct. 11 to demand an end to deportations of asylum seekers and closure of immigration jails. A similar-sized protest was held in Melbourne.

Since July 2013 asylum seekers reaching Australia by boat — many from Iraq and Afghanistan — have been sent to prisons on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island or the Pacific Island of Nauru. Those who arrived before then are being held in detention centers on Christmas Island, an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean, and other prisons in remote areas of Australia.

"Australia has helped cause the situation they are fleeing from and has an obligation to take people in," said Geoffrey Norman, a young factory worker from western Sydney who joined the protest.

Reza Barati, a 23-year-old Kurd from Iran, was killed at the Australian-run Manus Island detention center Feb. 17 after prison guards and Papua New Guinea police assaulted refugees demanding approval of their asylum claims. Sixty-two refugees were injured.

... "The purpose of the cops is to punish, not patrol. The purpose of the cops is to keep workers in line, to make an example of you if you come from the wrong class — and more so if you also happen to be the wrong color or the wrong nationality. The ruling class has a 'beasts in the jungle' mentality. They despise — and fear — the great mass of working people." ... — JACK BARNES FROM CAPITALISM'S WORLD DISORDER

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Some 600 people broke out of the family detention compound at Nauru Oct. 10 after being told they would be transferred to Cambodia.

In July, 157 Tamils were held for

weeks on an Australian customs boat in the Indian Ocean, while Australian officials tried to convince the Indian government to take them. They were eventually transferred to the jail on Nauru.

Who are the Cuban Five?



Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the operations and plans of Cuban-American paramilitary groups based in southern Florida. These rightist outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the Five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with "conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information."

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government's 1996 shoot-down of two Brothers to the Rescue planes that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana's repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years. His wife Adriana Pérez is barred from entering the United States.

René González returned to Cuba in May 2013 and Fernando González on Feb. 28 this year.

'Unbroken tide of solidarity will carry us home'

Sister of Antonio Guerrero talks about brother's new prison paintings at colloquium for Cuban 5 in Havana

BY RÓGER CALERO AND
MARY-ALICE WATERS

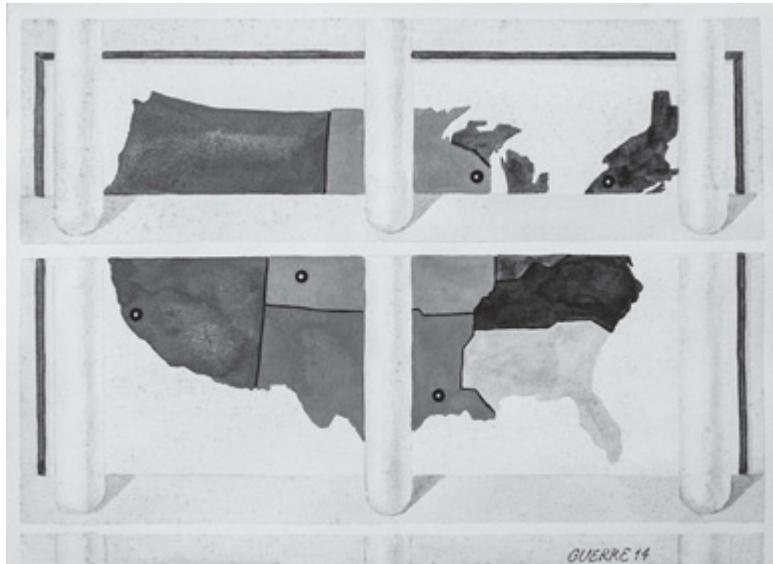
HAVANA — The 10th International Colloquium for the Freedom of the Cuban Five held here Sept. 11-12 brought together nearly 300 delegates from 48 countries to advance the international campaign to free the Cuban Five. Among the highlights of the weekend of political activity was the inauguration of 16 new prison paintings by Antonio (Tony) Guerrero, one of the five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and jailed by the U.S. government in 1998. (See "Who Are the Cuban Five?" on page 6.)

Following the inauguration of the watercolor series titled "Absolved by Solidarity," María Eugenia (Maruchi) Guerrero, Antonio's sister, spoke with the *Militant* about her brother and his latest work.

"Tony told us that he wanted to find a way to be part of the colloquium through the paintings," said Maruchi. "But he got behind because he's always taking on projects, including an exhibition in the prison of paintings by inmates. He had talked with the directors of the prison about allowing the inmates to have an exhibition, and he did most of the work of organizing it. It took time and he hadn't been able to work on his own paintings."

"So when he realized it was already Aug. 3, he said, 'I'm going to see if I can do a painting a day' and he began to work out a plan."

"Tony set himself a deadline, a goal, 16 watercolors in 16 days," Maruchi said. "It was an intense period of work, but then you know what my brother is



Two of 16 paintings from "Absolved by Solidarity" by Antonio Guerrero, one of Cuban Five. "The Decision of the Jury," right, depicts show of respect and solidarity from fellow inmates after verdict came down. "Five Distant Prisons" represents dispersal of Five across U.S., obstructing their appeal of frame-up.

like. He's very stubborn. When he sets a goal he always meets it, no matter how difficult it might be."

He succeeded and the original watercolors were on display during the colloquium. High-quality reproductions were also shown at the headquarters of the Service Employees International Union in Washington, D.C., Sept. 13 as part of activities in the U.S. marking the 16th anniversary of the arrest of the Five.

"Through the paintings Tony's saying, 'The world recognizes that the trial was an injustice, that we should be free,'" said Maruchi, explaining why her brother titled the exhibit "Absolved by Solidarity."

Over the last year a previous work — a series of 15 watercolors titled "I Will Die the Way I've Lived" — has been shown broadly to audiences at community and cultural centers, libraries, churches, universities, restaurants, art galleries, festivals, union-sponsored events and other venues in the U.S., Canada and around the world. Each of those 15 paintings depicts an aspect of the first 17 months of incarceration, during which the five revolutionaries were kept in punishment isolation cells known as the Special Housing Unit, or simply "the hole," at

the Federal Detention Center in Miami awaiting trial.

A true-to-life replica of the punishment cell based on the watercolors was built by Cuban artist Alexis Leyva Machado, known as Kcho, and is part of an exhibit of Guerrero's paintings at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Havana. Participants visited the installation during the two-day anniversary activities here.

"Tony said, 'OK, I've done the paintings on the hole, one of the experiences that had such an impact on us. There's another moment that shines a spotlight on the injustice. That's our trial,'" Maruchi said. "Tony spoke with Kcho by phone at the opening of the Fine Arts Museum exhibit last April and Tony told him, 'Now I want to do the same thing with watercolors about the trial.'"

The seven-month-long trial, which began in Miami on Nov. 27, 2000, was marked by blatant denial of constitutional protections, something not unfamiliar to millions of working people caught up in the U.S. system of capitalist "justice." Guerrero's 16 paintings recall aspects of the frame-up, denial of due process and dehumanizing prison treatment. These include the judge's denial of 11 requests by the Five to move the trial outside Miami due to the extensive biased publicity and actions by Cuban-American counterrevolutionaries to intimidate the jury there; the confiscation by the FBI of thousands of pages of documents that belonged to the Five, material that was then classified as "secret," thus denying the defendants access to "evidence" used against them; and the fact that journalists writing about the trial in the Miami press were simultaneously on the payroll of the U.S. government's Office of Cuban Broadcasting.

The U.S. government, its FBI agents and prison officials also tried many and diverse methods in failed attempts to break the Five. These included not only long stints of solitary confinement and other routine prison abuses, but other more personal reprisals. Olga Salanueva, married to René González, was arrested by FBI and immigration agents in Miami on Aug. 16, 2000, and deported on Nov. 21, 2000, just six days before the trial began. She and Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández, were then denied entry to the U.S. to visit their husbands.

The new series of watercolors starts



out with "Change of Venue Denied" and ends with "Five Distant Prisons," showing how prison authorities separated the Five after they were convicted and sent them to widely separated prisons across the country, obstructing their ability to prepare their appeals.

"Several of the paintings could be accompanied by documents that relate to the specific moment they depict," Maruchi told *Militant* reporters as they looked at each work. "For example, the painting about the diary that René began to write Nov. 21, when Olguita was deported, could have the letter René wrote that day."

"The painting of the newspaper clipping about the journalists for hire could be accompanied by one of the articles about that," she said. "Those are the kinds of things Tony was thinking about to round out the exhibit. But we haven't had time to prepare any of that yet."

Guerrero's latest work, like the previous "I Will Die the Way I've Lived," provides supporters of the Five around the world with new opportunities to broaden the defense campaign to win their release.

When the exhibit is mounted at the Museum of Fine Arts "my brother says that Kcho will have to build a replica of the courtroom where the trial took place," said Maruchi, as she commented on the paintings.

"This one, the painting of the foot, represents the strip search they had to undergo each day before being transported to the courtroom. He couldn't paint someone naked, bent over, the way they force you to do it. He painted just the foot. But his commentary explains what it stands for."

'This is the real jury'

"Then there's the beautiful painting representing the moment they were returned to their prison cells the day the verdict came down. When they were brought in the other inmates greeted them with a powerful round of applause. You see their hands clapping."

"In the accompanying note Tony explains what this meant to them. This was the real jury, he says — the first great expression of the wave of solidarity that carried the Cuban Five home."

Continued on page 9

Catalogs for prison paintings by Antonio Guerrero

"We know that right is on our side, but to win we need a jury of millions throughout the world to make our truth known."
—Gerardo Hernández

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Absueltos por la solidaridad
Absolved by solidarity



Coming Jan. 1!

ANTONIO GUERRERO

"I will die the way I've lived"

25 watercolors by Antonio Guerrero for the Little Publishing of the International of the Cuban Five
WITH TEXT BY ANTONIO GUERRERO, GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ, RAMÓN LABANÍN

Thomas Sankara: Struggles of women deepen revolution

Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle by Thomas Sankara is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month. Sankara was the central leader of the popular democratic revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987. The piece excerpted here is from a speech to a rally of several thousand women in the capital Ouagadougou on International Women's Day, March 8, 1987. On Oct. 15, 1987, Sankara was assassinated in a coup organized by Blaise Compaoré, who was recently deposed by mass demonstrations. Copyright © 1990 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Militant/Ernest Harsch

Thomas Sankara delivering speech commemorating International Women's Day, March 8, 1987. "Emancipation, like freedom, is not granted, it is conquered. It is for women themselves to put forward their demands and mobilize to win them," he said.

consideration."

What is clearly indicated here, comrade militants, is that the struggle to liberate women is above all your struggle to deepen our democratic and popular revolution, a revolution that grants you from now on the right to speak and act in building a society of justice and equality, in which men and women have the same rights and responsibilities. The democratic and popular revolution has created the conditions for such a fight. It now falls to you to act with the greatest sense of responsibility in breaking through all the chains and shackles that enslave women in backward societies like ours and to assume your share of the responsibilities in the political fight to build a new society at the service of Africa and at the service of all humanity.

In the very first hours of the democratic and popular revolution we said, "Emancipation, like freedom, is not granted, it is conquered. It is for women themselves to put forward their demands and mobilize to win them." In this way, our revolution has not only laid out the goal to be attained in the struggle for women's liberation but has also indicated the road to follow and the methods to use, as well as the main protagonists of this battle. ...

What work has the democratic and

popular revolution accomplished with respect to women's emancipation? What are the strong points, the weak points?

One of the main gains of our revolution in the struggle for women's emancipation has been, without doubt, the establishment of the Women's Union of Burkina [UFB]. The creation of this organization constitutes a major gain because it has given the women of our country a framework and sound tools for waging a successful fight. The creation of the UFB represents a big victory because it makes possible mobilizing all women militants around well-defined and just goals in the fight for liberation, under the leadership of the National Council of the Revolution.

The UFB is the organization of militant and serious women who are determined to work for change, to fight to win, to fall down repeatedly, but to get back on their feet each time and go forward without retreating. This is the new consciousness that has taken root among the women of Burkina, and we should all be proud of it. Comrade militants, the Women's Union of Burkina is your combat organization. It's up to you to sharpen it further so its blade will cut more deeply, bringing you more and more victories.

The different initiatives for women's emancipation that the government has been able to take over a little more than three years are certainly insufficient. But they have made it possible to take some steps, to the point where our country can today present itself as being in the vanguard of the battle to liberate women. Our women participate more and more in decision making and in the real exercise of popular power. The women of Burkina are present everywhere the country is being built. They are part of the projects — the Sourou [valley irrigation project], reforestation, the vaccination brigades, the "clean town" operations, the Battle for the Railroad, and so on.

Little by little the women of Burkina have stood up and asserted themselves, demolishing in the process all the male-chauvinist, backward conceptions of men. And this will go on until women are present in Burkina's entire social and professional fabric. For three and a half years our revolution has worked continually to eliminate all practices that demean women, such as prostitution and related problems, like vagrancy and female juvenile delinquency, forced marriages, female circumcision, and the particularly difficult living conditions women face.

By working to solve the water problem everywhere, by helping to install mills in the villages, popularizing the improved cookstoves, creating popular day-care centers, carrying out regular vaccinations, and encouraging a healthy, abundant, and varied diet, the revolution has no doubt greatly contributed to improving the quality of life of the Burkinabé woman. Women, in turn, should commit themselves to greater involvement in putting into practice the slogans of the fight against imperialism. They should be firm in producing and consuming Burkinabé goods by always asserting their role as major economic players — both as producers and consumers of locally made goods.

Though the August revolution has undoubtedly done much for the emancipation of women, this is still far from adequate. Much remains for us to do.

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Iraqi Kurds join battle

Continued from front page

ants with heavy artillery from Iraqi Kurdistan arrived several days earlier in the besieged Syrian town along the Turkish border, joining Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) that have held off a major offensive by a far bigger and better armed Islamic State for more than 50 days.

The unfolding battle for Kobani illustrates the growing unity and confidence of the oppressed Kurdish people, separated for decades by the borders of Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Iran. Their military formations, which have increasingly worked together, are the only effective force in the war against Islamic State. Their resistance has given a boost to the Kurdish national struggle, as well as inspired working people and women throughout the region and beyond.

Meanwhile, the U.S. big-business media, which for weeks ran daily stories about Kobani's imminent fall, has become more subdued in its coverage of the war in relation to the Kurds, particularly the role in Syria of the YPG, which is affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey. The PKK, which is on Washington's list of terrorist organizations, fought a three-decade war for rights and autonomy against the Turkish government, a U.S. ally, until a cease-fire in 2013.

When the battle of Kobani began in mid-September, the Turkish government stationed tanks and troops along its border with the town to block Kurdish fighters and supplies from getting to Kobani, which was surrounded on all other sides by Islamic State. When the town didn't fall after weeks of siege, Washington and Ankara allowed some minimal aid to get through. In addition to conducting airstrikes in the area, Washington carried out a one-time airdrop over Kobani of light weapons, ammunition and medical supplies from Iraqi Kurdistan Oct. 19. The Turkish government eventually allowed some 150 Peshmerga fighters to travel through Turkey to join the battle.

On Nov. 1, a few days after Pesh-

merga forces began entering Kobani, rallies took place in hundreds of cities worldwide in solidarity with the Kurds' fight to prevent Kobani from falling. Pro-Kurdish demonstrations in Turkey included an action of 20,000 in Diyarbakir; a protest in Istanbul; a rally of about 5,000 in the town of Tatvan in Bitlis province, with demonstrators shouting support for the YPG and jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan; a march in Antep with chants condemning recent deaths of miners and other workers on the job; and actions in Van, Tekman, Varto, Mus and Malazgirt, reported kurdishquestion.com.

About 10,000 marched in Cologne, Germany. Solidarity actions took place in six cities in India and seven provinces of Afghanistan, where marchers "carried photos of the people of Kobane and YPJ women fighters" and demanded NATO forces leave the country, reported Kurdish news agency Firatnews.

Turkish Kurds welcome Peshmerga

The Peshmerga reinforcements received a warm welcome as they traveled through Turkey's mostly Kurdish southeast. "Villagers set bonfires, let off fireworks and chanted by the side of the road as the convoy passed," reported Reuters. Thousands rallied in support in the town of Suruc on the Turkish border by Kobani.

"All the Kurds are together. We want them to go and fight in Kobani and liberate it," Issa Ahamd, an 18-year-old high school student, told Reuters. He is one of



Reuters

Kurds near Mardin, Turkey, Oct. 29 welcome convoy of Peshmerga vehicles with heavy artillery on their way to Kobani, Syria, to join the battle against the Islamic State there.

200,000 Syrian Kurds who took refuge in Turkey since the Islamic State assault.

Some 50 members of the Free Syrian Army entered Kobani Oct. 29 to join YPG and a smaller number of FSA members already there to help defend the city. The FSA is a military coalition that came together following the Syrian government's bloody crackdown on popular protests against the Bashar al-Assad dictatorship in 2011. The FSA was decimated in the civil war by pro-government forces and rival Islamist groups.

"The resistance shown by us, the Kurdish People's Protection Units and the factions of the Free Syrian Army is a guarantee for defeating ISIS's terrorism in the region," said an Oct. 19 statement issued by the YPG General Command.

"The result of this battle will shape the future of Syria and the democratic struggle for freedom and peace."

According to the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government, the 150 Peshmerga were sent to Kobani to deliver heavy weaponry, but not take part in combat. But at a news conference in Kobani Nov. 1 YPG and Peshmerga leaders stressed the need to forge a "national army."

"None of the parts of Kurdistan is different to us," Liwa Ebdulqahir, general commander of the Peshmerga force in Kobani, told Firatnews. "Today it is our enemies that brought us together. We are ready to do whatever we can. We are ready to sacrifice our lives for Kobani. We, the Kurdish people are in unity and will remain in unity."

Protests in Burkina Faso depose hated president

Continued from front page

solution with the killing of its central leader, Thomas Sankara, and other revolutionary cadre.

Burkina Faso is among the poorest countries in the world. Life expectancy is 56 years, the infant mortality rate is the ninth highest in the world and some 90 percent of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture. Compaoré's government reversed social projects aimed at combating this legacy and prioritized efforts to attract foreign capitalist investment in gold mining and cotton. Several years of falling prices of the two commodities have resulted in economic contraction and deteriorating social conditions for the majority.

The revolt against Compaoré's rule was prepared in the days before the scheduled Oct. 30 vote on the amendment. "We helped organize caravans of cars and motorbikes that stopped in markets and gas stations around the country urging people to come out," Serge Bambara, a rap singer known as "Smokey" and a leader of the group Balai Citoyen (the Civic Broom), said in a Nov. 4 phone interview from Ouagadougou, the country's capital. "People set up barricades on all the roads and in all the cities. We gathered near the National Assembly the night of Oct. 29 and stayed there."

Demonstrations grew and continued Oct. 30 and 31, as more and more gained confidence to come into the street actions organized by several opposition parties, unions and other groups.

Various wings of the officer corps and sections of the country's propertied ruling class have scrambled to cobble together a new government, vying with each other for power as they seek to close down space opened by popular

mobilizations for toilers to organize and fight.

After Compaoré's departure, Gen. Honoré Traoré, chief of staff of the army, declared Oct. 31 he would be in charge until elections could take place within a year. The next day, in face of new protests against Traoré, a group of junior officers led by Lt. Col. Yacouba Isaac Zida took over.

Concerned above all with bringing an end to the protest movement, Washington, Paris and allied African governments under the rubric of the African Union called for the military to hand over power to civilian authorities.

On Nov. 2 some 1,000 protesters in Ouagadougou led by opposition parties calling for civilian rule were dispersed by soldiers.

Demonstrations have since tapered off for the time being.

Renewed interest in 1983 revolution

The overthrow of Compaoré has renewed discussion and interest in the political legacy of Thomas Sankara and the advances of the democratic popular revolution he led. The 1983-87 revolution nationalized the land to guarantee to rural agricultural producers the fruit of their labor; it launched a mass tree-planting and irrigation project to stop the advance of the desert; it organized massive literacy and immunization campaigns and for the first time made basic health care available to millions. Women were drawn in large numbers into the social transformation, which included a fight to combat women's oppression.

The Burkinabe Revolution under Sankara's leadership identified with the revolutions in Cuba and Nicaragua and championed the struggles of peasants,

workers and oppressed peoples in the region, from the fight against apartheid in South Africa to the national struggles of the Palestinians in the Middle East and the Saharawi people in northwest Africa. It sought to build a world movement among semicolonial nations for cancellation of the debt owed to imperialist centers of finance.

Compaoré was a close ally of Washington and Paris, both of which established military bases in the country. Over the last two years the U.S. government allocated more than \$15 million in "counterterrorism" funding to boost the Compaoré regime's military capacity.

Demonstrators dubbed their protest the "Black Spring," a term inspired by the "Arab Spring," which began with the 2011 uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt that overthrew hated dictators. The protests have unnerved exploiting classes throughout the region. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, prison officials in the capital removed televisions from inmates' cells to prevent them from watching the news from the neighboring country, reported Agence France-Presse.

Capitalist media coverage in the U.S. and Europe have painted a picture of "chaos," with emphasis on burned buildings and looting and the unfortunate loss of a stable ally in Compaoré. "He remained close to the French during his presidency and came to be seen as a pro-Western leader and ally in the battle against Islamist militancy in the region," the *New York Times* wrote Oct. 31.

"I was not surprised by the uprising," Marc Kabore, 35, a dish washer who recently moved to New York from Burkina Faso, told the *Militant*. "People were fed up with the government, especially the repression and lack of democracy."

Cuban 5 Art

Continued from page 7

ity that has spread around the world."

The resilience, dignity and sense of humor of the Five comes through in the exhibit as well. In the watercolor titled "The Evidence," Maruchi said, "my brother wants people to see that one of the 'secret documents' seized by the FBI was a family recipe" — for roast pork!

"It's wonderful what he did with the paintings," Maruchi added. "It reflects his creativity, his strength."

"We never felt defeated," Antonio writes in his introductory note to the new paintings. "We knew we would be acquitted by the honest men and women of the world who have today become an unbroken tide of solidarity that will not be stemmed until it carries us back to our homes."

"Antonio's 15 paintings portraying their lives in the punishment cells have given impetus to a 'renewal of the campaign' to free the Five," Kcho told the *Militant* in Havana several days later, commenting on Guerrero's previous watercolor series, which have been viewed by some 15,000 visitors to Havana's Fine Arts Museum. "We're reversing a complacency that has grown up, an insensitivity toward what it means to be imprisoned for 16 years."